

color purple ADRENOCHROME

Tyrian Purple

Tyrian purple (aka Royal purple or Imperial purple) is a dye extracted from the murex shellfish which was first produced by the Phoenician city of Tyre in the Bronze Age. Its difficulty of manufacture, striking purple to red colour range, and resistance to fading made clothing dyed using Tyrian purple highly desirable and expensive. The Phoenicians gained great fame as sellers of purple and exported its manufacture to its colonies, notably Carthage, from where it spread in popularity and was adopted by the Romans as a symbol of imperial authority and status.

Manufacture

In Phoenician mythology, the discovery of purple was credited to the pet dog of Tyros, the mistress of Tyre's patron god Melqart. One day, while walking along the beach the couple noticed that after biting on a washed up mollusc the dog's mouth was stained purple. Tyros asked for a garment made of the same colour and so began the famous dyeing industry.

The first historical record of the dye is in texts from Ugarit and Hittite sources, which indicate that the manufacture of Tyrian purple began in the 14th century BCE in the eastern Mediterranean. Cloth dyed with Tyrian purple was a hugely successful export and brought the Phoenicians fame throughout the ancient world. Indeed

throughout the ancient world. Indeed, some historians (but certainly not all) claim that the very name Phoenicia derives from the Greek word phoinos meaning 'dark red' which refers to the dye and may itself be a translation of the Akkadian word for both Canaan and red, kinahhu. Despite their formidable reputation, the dyers of Tyre did not have a monopoly on the process even in the Late Bronze Age as four Linear B tablets from Knossos indicate that it was manufactured (albeit on a small scale) on Minoan Crete too, which also had a supply of the shellfish in its coastal waters.

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To elaborate on this, the dye is extracted from glands. Snail glands. You know what else has been extracted from glands?

The longer it aged, the "purple" dye ended up being the color of dried blood.